

6200 La Joya Pl. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

March 29, 2013

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

To whom it may concern,

This letter addresses my opposition to the FCC's plan to prohibit aircraft Emergency Locator Beacon (ELT) use of 121.5 Mhz.

I am opposed to the FCC's plan to prohibit the use of 121.5 Mhz for aircraft ELTs for a number of reasons. First, since the first requirement to have ELTs installed in aircraft, the technology has changed, particularly the technology available for portable transmitters and transceivers. Robust, compact, hand-held radios, cell-phones, consumer-level satellite-based location services (Spot and Spyder for example) have become common place in society, as well as in aviation – try to find a pilot without a modern hand-held aviation transceiver or cell phone or those flying in the remote parts of the country with a Spot or Spyder satellite unit. Second, because of the larger market (billion+ people for cell phones versus ~200,000 aircraft ELTs) the technology and features available are constantly improving. The huge market base also keeps prices down. What the FCC may require in a 406 Mhz ELT today would be considered outdated with respect to power consumption, signal propagation or features (e.g two-way communications rather than a transmit-only beacon) only in a year or two – look at the developments of the cell phone and consumer-level satellite-based communication services. Third, I would much rather leverage the money that would be spent on an 406 MHZ ELT on other communications devices that could be used outside of the aircraft, have more features, offer two-way communications. Furthermore I can easily afford to upgrade (which I do already) these devices frequently, every couple of years typically, and gain the improvements in technology, because of the aforementioned advantages of the consumer mass market. Another point: since the FCC is not selling the aviation frequency spectrum (or are you???) why not allow ELTs to continue to operate on 121.5 Mhz? Finally, pilots will continue to use 121.5 Mhz as an emergency frequency regardless. As a matter of fact, pilots flying cross-country are requested by the FAA to monitor 121.5 Mhz, so the frequency is still monitored, just not by satellite.

Regards,

George W. Slad
aircraft owner, pilot and amateur radio operator